

Fall 2008 Issue No. 85

# BENTRIM BUGLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHIGAN MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION



**Tree Farm Relay  
Race Photos**



**Grand Opening  
Stony Creek Skills Park**

**Call for MMBA At-Large  
Board Member Candidates**

**2008 IMBA World Summit**

**Return of The  
Mountain Bike Patrol**





IN THE PEDALTARIAN PARADISE OF PORTLAND, OREGON, PEOPLE WANT AFFORDABLE COMMUTER BIKES THAT RIP. KONA FACTORY TEAM RIDER AND SELLWOOD CYCLE OWNER ERIK TONKIN TOLD US SO. WE'VE BUILT HIM A FRAME IN THE PAST, BUT THIS YEAR HE GETS THE FULL RIDE. CHROMOLY FRAME, DURA-ACE DOWNTUBE SHIFTERS, CITY SPEED COME TO LIFE. GET DOWN WITH THE NEW

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The Michigan Mountain Biking Association (MMBA) is a 501-(C)(3) non-profit organization. We have 1,600 members in nine chapters throughout Michigan. The mission of the MMBA is to promote responsible mountain biking and to work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection through interaction with policy makers, the cycling industry, race promoters, mountain bikers and other trail users. The Bent Rim Bugle is published four times a year (March, June, Sept, Dec.) by the Michigan Mountain Biking Association and distributed to all members. It is made possible by volunteers and riders like you.

#### Bent Rim Bugle

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Visit the MMBA on the web at:  
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#### BRB Information

The Bent Rim Bugle (BRB) began over 15 years ago. Back then, the Michigan DNR was on the verge of closing all state land to mountain bikes. The BRB was the means for organizing the state's off road cyclists to work for continued access.

Today the BRB still carries the torch for off road advocacy, it has become the official newsletter of the MMBA. Published quarterly, the BRB keeps the MMBA membership up to date on what's happening throughout the State.

#### Contributing articles, artwork, and photos

If it's about mountain biking, please send it in. Electronic submissions should go to brb@mmba.org. We prefer documents in Microsoft Word, or simple text. Photos should be in jpg format and at least 300 dpi. We can't promise everything will get published, but we'll do our best. For more information on how to submit contact brb@mmba.org

#### Advertise in the BRB

The Bent Rim Bugle offers inexpensive and targeted advertising which helps with the cost of producing this cool newsletter.

#### Fall 2008 Issue No. 85

##### Inside this Issue

4	From the Desk of the ED
4	President's Report
5	Call for at-large Board Members
6	MMBA Happenings
6	BBBB
7	Wanted: Trail School Director
8	IMBA World Summit
9	Skills Park Grand Opening
10	Mountain Bike Patrol
11	REI & MMBA
11	Canton Trails
12	Chapter Chatter
16	New Bikes are Fun!
18	First Losers Club
18	Shifting Gears
19	Winner!
20	Coach
20	My Midland Trail Experience
21	Tree Farm Relay Race Photos

Contact us at brb@mmba.org for more info and ad rates.

#### Additional Copies

Additional copies of the BRB can be purchased for \$3.00 each, based on availability. Contact brb@mmba.org.

### August 2008 Membership Report

Chapter	Current Memberships	Change Since Last Issue	Change Since One Year Ago
Holly/Flint	74	-6 -8%	-5 -7%
Metro North	257	-5 -2%	-19 -7%
Metro South	295	-12 -4%	-48 -16%
Mid-State	103	+5 +5%	+13 +13%
Northeast	23	-2 -8%	-9 -38%
Northern	58	-6 -11%	-10 -18%
Potawatomi	206	-17 -8%	-48 -23%
Southwest	124	+7 +6%	-6 -5%
Western	187	+6 +3%	-4 -2%
Total	1393	-27 -2%	-113 -8%

Cover photo by Hans Nyberg/Ten Mile Media



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

The summer and fall of mountain biking are coming to end, but the MMBA is not slowing down and is revving for next year. There are number of projects being worked on to improve the professionalism and communication of the MMBA through our website, annual meeting and our presence in the community. But I think it also important for us to take a look a little closer look at our trails.

As much as many of us try to use mountain biking as our escape, it is getting harder and harder to get away from the fate of our economy as its weakness might ultimately affect our natural areas. Michigan State

Parks are still in a tough spot financially and if things don't change soon our own state parks will be in the red by the end of 2009. There are efforts out there, but things are stalled until are new officials are in place. Michigan has already shutdown some of its facilities and our neighboring states like Illinois have shut down some of its states parks as well.

So as the elections and the presidential debates loom over us, I encourage you to take a closer look at what park mileages are in your area and what candidates are supporting the parks in which you ride. It may not be a hot button issue like energy dependence or the Iraq war, but without funding for our parks we are losing a lot more than a few cents at the gas station, we are losing our place to play, exercise, reenergize, and connect with the world outside our cubicles.

Some of these mileages only come up every ten years, like the Washtenaw County Parks mileage, so now is the time our parks need us the most. Many of us may not be able to have a direct impact on which way the credit crunch falls, but we do have control over preserving our parks. In addition to regular mileage maintenance some cities are trying to take advantage of low real estate market and are looking to buy land for their park properties. These are all opportunities to form good relations with your elected officials and to volunteer to build more trails right in your backyard. Please support your local trails with your vote. The MMBA is working hard in all these areas, but your local support can make a difference.

Thank you,

-Marne

## President's Report

### Tread Lightly

This summer has been a hard one on our Michigan trails. Maybe it's global warming but we have seen many short and intense storm events that have turned sections of trail into raging rivers from short periods. The amount of soil that is moved by all this water is stunning and leaves the tell tale ruts and channels in the trail surface.

Good and sustainable trail design is the best solution but the fall-line sections of our many trails can't all be rerouted so our repair and maintenance load has been unusually high. But another thing I have noticed are the long skids left by locked rear wheels on these sensitive trails. We all know that our front brakes are much more powerful than our rear. Once a rear brake reaches it's limit of effectiveness the rear tire skids and turns into a knobby rake. So

the question I kept asking myself is do we really need them?

### *Warning- do not try this at home*

To answer this question I gave it a try. I removed the rear brake from my single speed and headed out on the trail. At first, it was intimidating. I kept thinking what if? But after a week, and then two I found myself wondering if I even used it when I had it. Not only was I committed to not locking my rear wheel, I had dropped a pound off my single speed and didn't miss it one bit.

Am I crazy? That is a wholly separate issue, but I had proven my point. Not. To remove your rear brake, but to give it a break. Just say no to locking your rear break. Our trails will thank you and you might even end up being a better rider.

-Bill Mayer



This is our classic not-too-dressy, not-too-shabby hat

made by Adams Fashion Headwear.

It's got their Cool Crown with mesh lining to promote cooling and minimize staining. The outer shell is 100% cotton while the lining is nylon. Has a leather adjustable strap and one size fits all. The MMBA logo is stylishly embroidered in front.

**\$15.00 at the MMBA Store**  
**mmba.org**



# Call for MMBA At-Large Board Member Candidates

At each year's MMBA Annual Meeting & Expo, the membership will vote in 4 At-Large Members of the MMBA Board of Directors. The MMBA State Board is made up of these at-Large Board Members, as well as one Representative from each Chapter.

As a group, board members are in charge of establishing a clear organizational mission, forming the strategic plan to accomplish the mission, overseeing and evaluating the plan's success, ensuring financial solvency of the organization, interpreting and representing the community to the organization, and instituting a fair system of policies and procedures for human resource management. This is accomplished through 4 Quarterly meetings per year, and regular e-mail discussions.

As an MMBA member, you have the opportunity to run for one of these at-Large positions.

## RUNNING/NOMINATION PROCESS

Per the MMBA by-laws, the Nomination Committee is charged with identifying candidates to run for the At-large positions. To fulfill this obligation, the Committee is looking for interested candidates.

You can request to be placed on the ballot by submitting a "Bio" with the following information to the nomination committee at [simse@ntcna.nissan-usa.com](mailto:simse@ntcna.nissan-usa.com):

- a) Applicant's history/accomplishments with the MMBA
- b) What the Applicant would like the MMBA to achieve in the following year and how the Applicant will help the MMBA to achieve that goal.
- c) Other MMBA members who are familiar with the applicant's work. Preferably a chapter officer or trail coordinator.

Any active and involved Candidates will then be placed on the ballot and the Bio's will be placed on the MMBA website as described above.

## VOTING PROCESS

The main method for voting is via in-person voting at the annual meeting. However, a proxy (by mail) process will be explained in the winter edition of the BRB, as well as the [mmba.org](http://mmba.org) forums.

Prior to the election, the (a) and (b) portion of the Candidates' bios will be posted for the voters to get an understanding of the candidates. This information will also be made available at the annual meeting.

Any questions, please contact Emil at [simse@ntcna.nissan-usa.com](mailto:simse@ntcna.nissan-usa.com). I look forward to hearing from some of you leaders out there!



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# MMBA Happenings

## Website

First of all the website has a designated group of individuals that are chugging along on completely overhauling our website. This is very good news for those of you that don't like the php error that has been popping up lately. We are doing a full hardware and software change. The changes should be wrapped up by the time we hit the trails again in the spring. A big thank you to Rob Ritzenhein and Octane Design for doing the work pro-bono and to our other volunteers.

In addition to our site seeing some big changes we are also making changes to our membership software. Mike Moss has been working a little too hard to turn around those memberships. Having separate software will streamline the process and allow expanded use of our database, sorting tools, and automatic renewals.

## Annual Meeting

February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mark your calendars folks, the annual meeting/expo is changing its date and its location to the Lansing Center right in downtown Lansing. Lansing will serve as a more statewide centralized location within nearly an hour of Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Royal Oak, Mount Pleasant, and Flint. The new location will hopefully better represent the MMBA as the statewide organization it is and also offers us a chance to bring in legislators or other government officials in a professional setting.

In addition to the location, The Lansing Center is also right off the freeway with plenty of parking, the space is nearly twice as big, has HEAT, and a bar on site. For vendors there is an easy access loading dock and a much nicer setting.

Stay tuned for other changes including an advocacy round table, silent auction items, and contests.

## MMBA biking community presence

I have been the executive director for nearly a year now and the commitment of our membership and volunteers still is a delightful surprise. We are one of the larg-

est mountain biking groups in the country, and show it on the trails with over 10,000 work hours and show it in our community. For instance at a recent MetroSouth, chapter board nominations had two or three people running for a position. And people like Jean Steinberg stepping up to host a Mountain Kids event for the first time. And Jonathan Rose and Shawn Murphy with support from Fraser bike bringing our Mountain Patrol back to life that really make me proud to represent this group.

At the state level we continuing our good relations with REI and made some excellent connections at Interbike in Vegas. The MMBA was voted REI non-profit of the month for both November and December. We will be featured in their flyers and stores and have the opportunity to setup booths and sell MMBA memberships during the Christmas season. For more information refer to the REI article.

The MMBA also made some great connections at Interbike, not only with the advocacy groups there like IMBA and Bikes Belong, but with key industry companies for sponsorships, donations and how we can work better with their advocacy efforts. We were well received and have verbal commitments from many companies to work closer or advocacy and sponsoring our programs.

I am still working through my stack of business cards, but this should be exciting year. And it will also add a little more fun to our silent auction and annual meeting. I am in talks right now with Genuine Innovations to sponsor a fundraising game on "Fastest flat tire change", complete with grand prizes that could come from Genuine Innovations, Titus, Felt, Saris,...etc.

## Volunteer positions needed!

### Seeking Treasurer

The MMBA is in search of a new treasurer. Expect to dedicate a maximum of 10 hours a month and slightly more at tax return time. We need someone who can help with the following:

- Established book keeping and ac-

counting in place

- File annual tax returns
- Disperse checks
- Work with Executive Director to do the budget
- Provide financial oversight

Joe Solecki has been a valued member of the MMBA and was our 2006 State level volunteer of the year.

### Seeking Director of Advocacy

The MMBA is also in search of a director of advocacy. We need someone who can help with the following:

- Coordinates statewide advocacy efforts

- Works with the Executive Director and Director of Governmental Affairs

- Establishes good relationships with statewide land management

Thank you Jason Jones for all your efforts at the state level and your continued work at the local level.

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## BBBB

### 2008 Bulletin Board Biker Bash

Well the date has been set, it will be the 25th of Oct and will be held at the Skills Park at Stony Creek Metropark.

There will be the usual events, chili cook-off, bake-off, Huffy toss, rim shoes, sled pull, raffle, hope to have a fire as long as we can get a fire pit. There will also be a canned food donation. If you have an extra can or two bring it along to help those who are being hit by this economy worse than the rest of us

Team Tree Farm will be doing their annual "Keep 'em Warm" clothes/blanket drive again. So it's time to clean out those closets and such and bring sweaters, hats, gloves, coats and blankets, new or used, kids or adults to the BBBB. They will go to a charity or warming shelter and put to real good use. You can drop them off at the TTF compound.



## Wanted: State Director of Trail School

Yes, that's a help wanted advertisement. I've been giving this issue quite a bit of thought over the last several weeks. I've come to the conclusion that I may not be the best person for this job- or at the least, the best person right now.

Like most involved mountain bikers, our mountain biking activities must also be balanced with our work lives (our real jobs), our family obligations, as well as other factors. For myself, as a goal oriented person, I've worked to balance my goals and activities with regards to family, job, biking activism and bike racing. This year, I have to say I finally realized that it's not possible to spread oneself out so far - all the goals then get shorted. Had I been more honest with myself last February, I'd have realized I don't really have time to do all the activities on my plate. But I also knew that Dan worked hard at the Trail School and he also needed a break. Most people would agree that the family and job obligations cannot be slighted. So for me, that leaves my goals with regards to biking activism and mountain bike riding & racing.

I have informed the board that they should advertise for a successor. Dan Harrison built a great program. I've tried to expand, enhance and build upon this program, but I believe I have had very

*(Continued on page 15)*

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Still Special





Todd Scott

## 2008 IMBA World Summit

- Todd Scott

They don't disappoint. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) puts on an incredibly valuable and inspiring world summit every couple years. This year's in Park City, Utah continued that winning streak.

Of course, how can you go wrong when you combine perfect weather, cold beers, the world's foremost mountain bike advocates and Park City's 300 miles of singletrack?

### Wednesday

The event kicked off at Utah's Olympic Training center. We had excellent food and beer, but the highlight was watching the Flying Aces ski jumping team. But before they came out, IMBA executive director Mike Van Abel showed them how it's done. Nerves were a bit on edge, especially from the IMBA staffers around me, until Mike nailed his ski jump landing.

### Thursday

The first opening speaker was John Burke, president of Trek Bicycles. Trek is really stepping up their support for bike advocacy through their One World, Two Wheels initiative. The initiative's goals are:

- Give \$1 million to the Bicycle Friendly Community program of the League of American

can Bicyclists to increase the number of Bicycle Friendly Communities in the U.S.

- Give \$600,000 to the international Mountain Bike Association for their Trail Solutions Program.

- Increase the number of trips taken in the U.S. by bike from the current 1% to 5% by 2017.

Todd Scott

National Park Service (NPS) Director Mary Bomar followed. Her message was "bicycling can be a major element of visitor experiences at national parks." She added that IMBA and the Park Service share a "special bond." Another bond? The Director's son is an active mountain biker and he's been very helpful in bringing the Director more in tune with mountain biking.

The breakout sessions were next. I attended "Linking Downtown to Dirt" and got an excellent overview of the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community program — something that should be pushed more in Metro Detroit and across Michigan. Currently only Ann Arbor has been recognized, though Flint recently won an honorable mention. Note that mountain biking is a part of the Bicycle Friendly Communities scoring system.

I also attended an informative risk management session. One key design principle for reducing liability — "No forced risk".

Next, IMBA board member John Bliss and I gave a session "Effective Club Leadership". John handled most of the board governance best practices while I provided real world how-to and how-not-to examples.

### Friday

One keynote highlight for the morning was from Joel Holtrop, the Deputy Chief of the

(Continued on page 17)



IMBA's Jenn Dice and NPS Director Mary Bomar



# Stony Creek Skills Park Grand Opening

-Marty Shue

It was November of 2003 when MMBA Executive Director Todd Scott embarked to draft the first proposal for the Stony Creek Skill Park. It was August 17, 2008 when the Metro North Chapter of the MMBA held their Grand Opening celebration for the new Stony Creek Skills Park. During that time, the MMBA state board turned over 3 Presidents, Marne Smiley came on board as the Executive Director, the Southeast Chapter of the MMBA merged with the Pontiac Lake chapter and then split into two new chapters - Metro North and Metro South. Throughout all of these changes, a few key players kept their eye on the prize and continued to fight for what they knew would one day become a successful freeride park in Southeast Michigan. Mike Moss and Nick Shue have worked this project from start to finish, with help along the way from some very important volunteers.

What happened in those five years? Well, a lot! The Stony Creek park managers have always been supportive of building a freeride style skills park, and by the spring of 2004, we'd gotten the first preliminary approval for the Skills Park. However, we experienced a series of setbacks from that point forward. The project and proposal spent a lot of time with the Huron Clinton Metro Parks Planning Department. There were environmental concerns, liability con-

cerns, maintenance concerns and funding concerns. The location of the Skills Park changed a few times and the MMBA was tasked with having the CAD drawings of the structures certified by a structural engineer. It was agreed that the MMBA would build and maintain the stunts, and American Cycle and Fitness showed their dedication to advocacy by funding the entire project.

In the spring of 2007, after the pump track layout had been painted and marked, the drawings had been certified and the funding had been secured, the project was put on hold yet again. The HCMP Planning Department had identified some plant species in the area where we were to build, that needed to be saved. The Skills Park was moving again. This time, we were given an area of land in an area of the park that is completely separate from the existing mountain bike trails. While at first it seemed like a less desirable location because it could not be connected to the XC mountain bike trails, we quickly learned that this new location had much more to offer than previous space could provide. This new area offers nice elevation changes and is a huge space in comparison to the previous location. In addition, the new location has given us the opportunity to have picnic tables and a parking area close to the Skills Park, making it much more inviting to spend the day hanging out.

On September 21, 2007, the first official Stony Creek Skills Park work day was held. By this time, Tim Dunbar had become an incredible asset to this project as it was Tim who secured the engineering certification of the structures, it was also Tim who designed what was to become the largest pump track on record. With Tim leading the build efforts, we had about 15 people turn up for the first official work day. The park had dropped loads of dirt earlier in the week, and had provided us with a 500 gallon water tanker for the day, and Pete Kresmery came through with a pump/hose system in a trailer on the back of his vintage Jeep (which was invaluable and super cool to see). After a couple more work days that fall, the pump track was left to 'cure' over the winter - the theory being that the weight

Mike Moss



and wetness of the snow would harden up the pump track over the cold months.

While waiting for the ground to thaw enough to place pin-flags, Mike Moss was shopping for lumber. The second weekend in May saw the first official build day of 2008 and the focus was entirely on building wooden

(Continued on page 17)



Mike Moss





## The Return of The Mountain Bike Patrol

- Jonathan Rose, Co-Director MMBP

The trails will soon be alive with red and white shirted riders, carrying giant trail luggage on their backs, and asking everyone if they need something. From water, to tubes, chain links, derailleur hangers, even first aid and bandages for those unfortunate enough to hit the dirt, the MMBA Mountain Bike Patrol has rolled back onto the scene with a Sept 27th IMBA patrol workshop. This class has had tremendous interest, filling up with over 15 participants in a little over one weeks time. The MMBA is proud to have over 20 certified, supplied patrollers on the trails in the fall of 2008!

The MMBP operates under the MMBA as a volunteer organization dedicated to patrolling designated city parks, state parks and recreation areas, along with Metro Parks and even county parks. The MMBP works hand in hand with the land management of

each trail location, this gives the MBP the ability to act as trail stewards on the front line of advocacy. By helping those in need, patrollers are giving back to the sport they love.

The mission of the Michigan mountain bike patrol program is to promote responsible mountain biking through the philosophy of IMBA, with environmentally sound and socially responsible riding. Patrollers will help with anyone in need while on the trail, including hikers, horse back riders, and mountain bikers. The MMBP works to maintain and promote trail opportunities through continued good relations with land managers, local police departments, local governments, and other trail users. Emphasis for all mountain bike patrollers is placed on emergency care, mechanical assistance, environmental protection and building public respect for the sport of mountain biking. Enforcement is not a function of the MMBP

in anyway.

So keep an eye out on your local trails, in

*(Continued on page 17)*





# REI and MMBA

## The strong relationship continues

- Marne Smiley

This summer the MMBA and REI initiated a pilot program for a Mountain Biking 101 class. Participants signed up at their local REI and the clinic was taught by a MMBA volunteer. The clinics attracted people who had not been on a bike in years to experienced riders to a 12-year old racer. We piloted one class out of every store and staged at Stony Creek, Maybury, and Olsen Park.

The clinics were divided into three parts: classroom, bike safety check, and trail riding. The classroom went over skills and equipment that will give the best mountain biking experience. The bike safety check made sure the brakes were in good working order, the tires were properly inflated, and the chain is lubed. Then we hit the trails to go over the skills we learned. The program still has a few kinks to work out, but the highest attendance was 14 people and we are planning on expanding the program next year.

The REI Non-profit of the month for November and December is first and foremost, a way for a non-profit to get their information into the hands of more people. The monthly flyer is picked up by many people in the three stores, and I have a feeling, it seems by many more after that. However, the listing on our website, and in particular, the e-mail blast that goes out before the beginning of the month, reaches upwards of 45,000 households. The website listing that is reaching all of those people is also providing a hot link to the non-profit website.

Also, the opportunity for the Non-Profit of the Month to come into all three stores and set up an informational display, provides the opportunity for the group to interact directly with potential supporters.

Finally, it provides a chance for REI employees to become more familiar with different non-profits. This is important because the only way for a non-profit to become eligible for grants from REI is if they are nominated by an employee during the grant process which begins in December.

# The Morton-Taylor Trails in Canton

- Gary Anderson (Poto Chapter)

As you may or may not have seen from my posts on the website, there is a new biking/hiking trail system in the neighborhood, more specifically in Canton Township. Presently, there are about 3 miles of ready-to-ride singletrack with more to come in the near future. Due to the terrain (lack of big hills) it is more of a mild intermediate level trail but with enough twists & turns, wooden bridges, optional technical sections and river views along the way to keep a rider of any ability interested. There is also about 3-4 miles of well marked, packed gravel, non-motorized roads that run along the sides of the river as well.

This area has a great deal of potential for outdoor recreational activities such as walking, hiking, biking, cross country skiing, wildlife watching, etc. It will eventually run half way through Canton and also link up to the I-275 bike path. The township just recently got funding approved for five pedestrian bridges that will be installed next year and allow users to cross the river throughout the park.

The Grand Opening of this trail system took place on this past June 7th and was well attended, I believe around 300-400 people attended the festivities and ribbon cutting



ceremonies.

There is no fee to use the trail and the gate to the main parking lot opens a half hour before sunrise and closes a half hour after sunset.

I have over 200 hours of trail work invested in this project so far and have organized two official trail maintenance days this past summer with almost 50 volunteer hours logged. I would like to express a BIG sincere thank you to those that showed up and sacrificed a Sunday morning to help make this trail a better place to ride:

Harold Daniels (wicked weighs)  
Dan Koker (toobad)  
Travis Roth (troth)  
Claudia Bean (froggyrider)  
Frank Bean (macbean)  
Loren Konkus (Loren)

I would also like to thank the Canton Township engineers of the Parks and Recreation department that have been more than supportive to work with !

This trail system will only get better and allow people of all ages & abilities to get out away from their TVs and computers & enjoy the outdoors. It is listed in the MMBA trail guide under the Morton-Taylor trail heading and there is a nice color map that you can download and print. Maps 1 & 2 are an older hand-modified version and Map 3 is the digital color copy with the new trails in orange. The township has stated that it will eventually be updated with GPS. Once on the trail, look for the orange diamond markers. There are directions on the website, but here is how to get there:

If taking I-275, take the Michigan Avenue exit and proceed west about 1.5 miles to Morton Taylor road and turn right (North), continue about a quarter of a mile and look for the green sign that says Lower Rouge River Recreation area, turn left and the parking lot is right there. Morton-Taylor is between Sheldon and Lilley roads and the trails go east & west from there.

There are south and north loops listed on the map, but they are still undeveloped at the present time and I wouldn't recommend riding them.



# Chapter Chatter



Highland to do and expect them to be completed by the end of October. The Highland kiosk will have a special dedication ceremony attached to it. We plan on dedicating the kiosk to the last TC, Carlos, who just this year passed on. As we all know Carlos gave of himself endlessly to the MMBA & MTB'ing and we feel that this would be a fine tribute to him.

We are proud to announce that both Chapter benefit races were smashing successes. "The Tree Farm Relay" saw 42 teams register. The weather & atmosphere were great and as always no one was disappointed. The CPS race was held at Maybury and it also was a great time had by all. Together both events brought to the chapter around \$5500. But neither of the events could have had such great success if not for the always giving volunteers of the Metro South Chapter. You all should be very proud of the outstanding jobs you all did.



We finally unveiled our new "Metro South Chapter Tool Trailer!!!! It's equipped with all the tools for a major trail day. We also purchased a generator for power tools and a gas grill to cook food for all our hungry volunteers. A HUGE thanks goes out the Dave Poirer for all the work he put in on buying, outfitting and getting the graphics done on it.

As always the summer was filled with group rides almost every day of the week at one of our fine trails in the chapter. This is all in part to the fine job our TC's do at their respective trails, so take a bow TC'S!!!!

We gave the membership the summer off from meetings so folks could enjoy the weather and do some biking!! But we got back to business in September with our chapter meeting. We had our TC's give their trail report. We had an open discussion on how we are going to handle sponsorship for chapter events in the future. There's discussion of exploring the possibility of another trail in the chapter.

But most importantly we had nominations for chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and At-Large Board Member. After all was said and done the nominations

## Metro South

Hello MTB'ers,  
Just thought I would give you an update of what the Metro South Chapter was up to this summer!! We've got a lot accomplished these past few months, such as a major reroute that took a whole weekend to blaze out at ILRA. This reroute was much needed to eliminate a sketchy downhill that was eroding with each passing rider. Also quite a

few new highlights were added at Lakeshore Park (Tree Farm). These would include log piles, stairs, skinnies and a rock garden. Thanks so much to all the volunteers who came out to get dirty and make both these trail much more fun.

We are also half way through our Kiosk Project fully funded by REI. We now have fully functioning kiosks at Maybury & Hickory Glen trails. We still have ILRA &





are as follows:

President- Scott Krahn, Joe Foy, Frank Bean  
(On 9/12, Joe Foy withdrew his president nomination)

Vice President- Brian Deal, Joe Foy, Frank Bean

Treasurer- Dave Poirer

Secretary- Claudia Bean

Member at Large- Daniel Sterling, Dave Cox, Loren Konkus

They will post their "resumes" under MMBA News section soon.

Election to be held at Monday Dec 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Meeting will start at 7 pm . Meeting location- TBA. Good luck to all who were nominated!!!!

So that's about it in our little corner of the state. We are so looking forward to all our upcoming events, the great fall weather and season change that brings NIGHT RIDING!!! So from all of us to all of you...Happy Pedaling!!!!

Joe (Hodaddy)

President

Metro South Chapter

Metro North

metronorth.mmba.org

The Metro North chapter has had a VERY busy summer with HUNDREDS of hours of volunteer effort being put into the building of the park. We had our grand opening on August 17th, and had well over 100 people in attendance. The greatest thing was seeing the number of kids out there, and the park continues to be quite

busy with visitors. As more people find out about the park, we expect the attendance to grow! But, the work there isn't close to done, as this was just the initial phase one of the park. There will be plenty of work out there next year as we continue to expand the park. The Stony Creek MetroPark management is ecstatic about the park, and how well received it has been. They are pushing for continued expansion, so keep your eyes open for more workdays and projects in the future.

I want to make sure to extend a HUGE thanks to a few people, without whom this project would have never happened: Mike Moss, the Stony Creek TC, who pushed this project for years, Tim Dunbar, the Metro North Freeride Coordinator, who helped teach all of us lycra wearing cross country weenies build something other than single track, Pete Kresmery, who was the made with all of the tools and toys that made our work so much easier (and was normally on-site WAY before anybody else), and most of all, Don Potter, the Stony Creek MetroPark Superintendent. Without Don's constant support for the past few years, NONE of this would have ever happened.

We have a VERY busy fall with 3 different events happening. By the time this BRB hits your mailbox, we will have already had our first annual Addison Chapter Benefit XC Race. This will be a new annual event for the chapter, and we are looking forward to promoting the race, and putting on an enjoyable event for the local racers. Then, we have the return of the Massive Fallout. This was a very popular event last year, and we hope to repeat the success this year. And lastly, the Metro North chapter is holding the BBBB this year. The plans are to hold the event at the new skills park, and we hope it's a chance for even more people to come out and enjoy the new facilities. Hope everyone has a GREAT fall!

MidState

This year has been a pretty successful year for our chapter. Our chapter has shown a membership increase of 15% for 2008. We have also had two new trail systems approved this year, Anderson Park (Lansing) and Legg Park (Okemos). Building has continued at other trails as well. Earlier in the year about a half mile of new singletrack was added to Burchfield with additional

mileage to come. Bennett Park has added a few more miles of fresh singletrack as well. They are also planning for a new trailhead sign with a map of the park.

We also pulled off our inaugural poker run at Burchfield on Father's day. We had over 40 participants for the events, which helped raise money for chapter tools and signage for our local parks. We will begin planning this winter to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual MidState Poker Run an even bigger success.

The midstate chapter race team was something new we tried this year. There has been a little bit of a learning curve on what makes a team successful. However, we have had a pretty good turn out at a majority of the CPS races. In fact, many of our riders are currently holding a top 3 spot in their classes. I would like to congratulate our two younger riders, Cooper Frost and Carter Moore. They are the youngest competitors on our team and are currently battling each other for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the beginner men 11-14 class. Both of them are also active in maintaining chapter trails which is great.

The race team is seeking new sponsorship for the 2009 race season. If you are a local MidState Chapter bike shop and would like to sponsor the team you can contact: Jake Pangle, jake\_p5@comcast.net or call me at 517-262-3865.

Trail Notes:

Anderson Park:

Brad Potter, TC has done an excellent job at laying out nearly 5 miles of trail at the park in a relatively short period of time. He has also spent a lot of time fielding questions from both the township and land owners. There are 3 planned loops for the trail system. Currently the green loop is finished and part of the red loop has been completed. Signage has been placed on the completed sections of trail. We would also like to thank all of the volunteers who have turned out to support this trail. Brad hosted several trail days this summer and the turnout was pretty good at each one. Watch the board for future trail days. If you would like to help out contact Brad Potter, bpotter08@gmail.com

Bennett Park:

Storms early this year reeked havoc on the trail system here. Several trees fell making the trail system literally un-passable. David



and Marty spent a great deal of their time getting the trail back into shape. They are continuing to cut additional singletrack at the park and a couple of new bridges will be added this year. If you are interested in volunteering at Bennett Park contact David Frost, black\_ice@att.net

#### Burchfield Park:

We have several plans for the future of Burchfield. New singletrack will be added toward the south end of the park. This will be an addition to the "Bob Supremacy" section that was added earlier this spring in honor of retired Ingham County Park Director Bob Moore. We are also planning for a 2009 race at Burchfield details on this are to come as we figure out how and when this event will be run. At some point in the future we hope to hold this as a MMBA CPS race. Watch for the 2009 poker run as well. If you are interested in volunteering at Burchfield contact, Jeff Popard  
jeff.popard@kramerairtool.com

#### Legg Park:

Steve Brunner has been working with Meridian Township on get a small section for trail approved for new singletrack at Legg Park. So far his efforts have paid off with them allowing him to flag 2-3 miles for new trail. Once the new trail is built the park will re-evaluate his request for additional trail. Contact Steve at sbrunner@brvassociates.com

#### Other trails:

Heritage Park reported there was a need for some trimming earlier this year. Other than that I don't have any additional news to report from there.

There were talks with Ella Sharp Park director and members of Cascades Cycling Club about the possibility of adding trail signs to the current trail system. We had also requested changes be made to some of the washed out sections of trail. There will be a future trail day to fix eroded sections once I finish evaluating the most problematic areas. Watch the board for additional info.

By the time you read this a trail day at Sleepy Hollow will have occurred in preparation for the upcoming race on Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>.

The chapter is helping out with the annual Healthy and Fit expo in Lansing this year on Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> at the Lansing Center. Thanks to

Tim Kissman for setting us up with a booth. We will be recruiting new members, handing out area trail maps, and answering questions about the MMBA. For information on how the expo went check out <http://www.healthyandfitmagazine.com>

And finally,

To close with I would like you all to read an email that Chris sent out to the chapter.

"Hello again, just another update from the chapter. Sorry for the length, but this is an important topic.

As all of you know, other than the Executive Director the MMBA is run entirely by volunteers. Our chapter is 100% volunteer based. I am proud to say that while our chapter is one of the smaller chapters in the state, we have initiated a lot of great projects, and have several more on our horizon.

Completed 2008!

- We have build nearly 5 miles of new, fresh, sweet singletrack at Anderson Park.

- We held our first annual Poker Run this past June raising over 500 dollars for our chapter.

- We put in a new extension at Burchfield near the McNamera landing.

- Another successful race was held at Adrian

- A big trail clean-up project was completed at Bennett Park after the big storms this summer

There is one thing in common for all these events, they all required significant time and effort. Unfortunately, the majority of the work was completed by a small handful of people. We did see a good turn out at the Anderson Park trail days and a few of the Burchfield trail days this spring, and I am very grateful for those of you who showed up. Every person who has shown up for a trail day, member or not, should feel proud that they showed some ownership of the trail and made it better for everybody else. However, the vast majority of the work is done by a very small group of people. This puts a very

large strain on these few volunteers. We all have to juggle work/school and duties at home, and sometimes there isn't much time left for anything else. However, it is important that we give something back to the trails. They don't build or maintain themselves. While we all would rather be out riding our bikes, sometimes it is important to leave the bike at home and pick up a saw, rake, or loppers.

I didn't want this email to sound like I am begging, but I am. We need more help to accomplish these tasks without running the risk of getting burned out. The more people that show up for trail days, the more time we have to be available for other, smaller jobs like clearing trees or face slappers from other trails. Heaven forbid we actually have time to ride! Just being a member isn't enough, we need people helping out on the trail or with planning/organizing."

This was basically in response to an argument that ensued on the Midstate message board after a rider was irritated that a tree had fallen onto the trail and was not cleared in a timely manner. The tree was down for over two months, which I agree is a lengthy period of time. However, with a volunteer based organization things like this will occur. Remember we are mountain bikers things like rocks, roots, and trees will be on the trail. If you don't want to encounter such obstacles on the trail I suggest trading in the knobbies for some skinnies and sticking to the road...

#### Poto

This past weekend was historic for the Potawatomi trail. You may have loved it, you may have hated it, but we all know that the first hill at the Poto was not a sustainable section of trail. And it has been re-routed. So rest easy, you won't have to ride around the water bars or go anaerobic any longer. The new section of trail gives us great views of a small lake and some other interesting natural features, all without a single geoweb mat. Thank you to Jason, Norm and Greg for spear heading this monumentus project. We all appreciate your hard work.

And if you like what we've done, I encourage you to get involved and help with future trail projects. Nothing is more rewarding than riding a section of trail that you helped build. We'll send out the info as it comes.



Bill Mayer

Southwest

Say good bye to summer. By comparison to recent trends, it was a mild one. A thunderstorm system left us some tree work and caused a little erosion, but a few days without electricity will remind you just how good we have it most of the time. So, let's count our blessings. No tornados, mild temperatures, low humidity, and fairly regular rain. I give it a ten.

Permission was granted for trail enhancements at Fort Custer this spring and an optional route is now offered to the Crazy Beaver Loop. It uses old military trenches both riding along and across and offers a test of technical ability. I'm proud of our work and have only positive feedback.

The disc golf world championships are history and estimates have as much as \$1,300 in revenue to MDNR for their effort. The disc golfers knew going in that the course would be closed for their use during hunting season. It now seems they want to abandon nine holes and build nine additional so that play can continue through hunting season. Go figure! So far the disc golf has quietly co-existed with trail use give or take a close call or two. Here is an interesting story for POW Paul. He was out on a weekday giving some friends from the mystic east a tour of Fort Custer when he realized he was alone. He stopped, waited, then began calling, went back a ways, called some more. "RICK". . . "R-I-C-K". Then this disc golfer came out of the woods and says "S-h-h-h-h, People are trying to putt out here". By the way, it wasn't that Rick couldn't keep up with a 65 year old grampa, he was fixing a flat tire.

You know that old saying *if it aint broke don't fix it*? The CPS (Championship Point Series) is talking about taking the Fort Custer Stampede away from the spring schedule. Don't screw with our groceries! We chose this here-to-fore unwanted time slot because it was a good fit with the pressures from other park users and by golly we've had for 14 years! If the CPS needs an early race on the east side of the state, look at February.

The best riding of the year is just ahead. Wetter, cooler, more scenic, all add up to a

more pleasant ride with less dust and more traction. Re-arrange your schedule and ride right after work, you can eat dinner after the precious day light is used up.

Hey! Somebody reads this column! I got a thank-you from a poison ivy sufferer. Keep some Permatex brand Fast Orange hand cleaner in your shower. It works.

Mike Needham

Western

On July 30th, Luton Park TC's Rick Plite and Steve Kunnath hosted an Introduction to Luton Park Group Ride. A diverse group ranging from a dad riding with pre-teenage sons to racers. Before embarking on the tour, Kent County Parks Director Roger Sabine met with the group. Roger spoke on the growing relationship between the chapter and Parks and ended on a history of the Luton Farm and the adjacent properties purchased to create Luton Park. Riders then took in a leisurely ride of the current 3.5 mile stack loop. From time to time the group was stopped and aspects of trailbuilding and features were explained. After a refreshment stop at the end of the loop, several riders took in a second loop.

In partnership with the Alticor (Amway) Fitness Center, an mtb 101 class has been taught onsite. Beginning riders attend a Tuesday and Thursday evening class at the fitness center. Covering topics including bike fit, simple maintenance, and an overview of local trail advocacy. The following Saturday a graduation class is held at the Cannonsburg Ski Area. The Outer Loop is used as a starting point and on the second lap; the Creek Trail and Plite's Peak are incorporated into the ride. An advanced option is offered on the IMBA corkscrew. After the completion of two class sessions about 50 beginning riders have attended.

The Hungerford Lake Trail has been completely resigned. The mtb trail is now marked with yellow arrow directional signs. We left the old blue mtb symbol signs in place as well. Key intersections where the horse and mtb trails overlap are well marked for both users. The end result is very little horse traffic straying onto the mtb trail. On sections of trail needing little signage to provide direction, the signage has been intentional left sparse. The trail is in

great shape and now that it is well marked. Go ride it.

Planning has started for both the 2009 Yankee TT and the 2009 Midwest Mountain bike Summit. However there are still positions open on both planning committees. If you are interested in being involved, drop me an email.

Nate Phelps

President, western MMBA  
western@mmaa.org

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(Continued from page 7)

mixed success. The target to get a trail school instructor in each chapter is severely short. We have two actual and two potentials out of nine chapters.

Perhaps the chapters and the membership don't see trail school as a valuable tool worth getting a chapter instructor assigned? That could be, though perhaps the true failure may be my inability to communicate adequately this need, thus not getting the needed responses?

I've been heavily involved in the MMBA since 1998 at state and local levels, with regards to racing and points, with trail work and trail school. This is my last season tabulating points. I am ceasing participation in the race committee. I hold no other MMBA positions now except the Trail School director. My advocacy goal for 2009 is to work hard to make the Yankee Springs Time Trial another big success, then- as of the end of April 2009, simply be another MMBA member who has time to show up on a trail day.

The next trail school director should likely be someone that has time develop the school further, the ability to communicate the need for the school to membership and to pull the chapters along to participate. I wish the next trail school director the best of luck with this important program.

Thanks

Dennis Murphy, eventually to be simply a member.





## Part 2:

# New Bikes Are a lot of Fun - Especially Locally Made Ones!

Scott Silvers, Poto Chapter

Last BRB, I wrote how my custom steel hardtail, from Chris Zias Cycles, had finally come together. To recap, I won an auction for a custom frame at an MMBA fundraiser/Tree Fort Beer release party. My first few dirt rides revealed that it was a revelation in hardtail handling for me – I loved its stable, yet corner carving effortlessness. The bike turned out better than I expected, but getting there took some tweaking along the way – Chris Zias and I worked on getting the details just right, and at the end of the article, we still had a bit more tweaking to go. This follow-up report will take us through the final touches and thoughts on how everything went. Hopefully, this report will provide you with a glimpse of the unpredictable, yet exciting world of custom bike procurement!

Being that the bike's genesis was at beer release party, I knew I had to have a beer bottle opener on the frame – that's just a given. Chris fretted over finding just the right opener, and finally settled on New Belgium's "snifter style" bottle opener. What better found object, other than the maker of the elusive "Fat Tire" beer's bottle opener, could not be imagined? We settled on placing the modified bottle opener in between the chain-stays, directly behind the bottom bracket shell. It was neat to see "New Belgium" underneath the frame, but I knew it

would get covered up eventually with powdercoat – but still, there it was! I even tested it out with a few beers after I got the frame back from Chris.

Chris had the frame not only to affix the bottle opener, but to revise a few of the braze-ons for the cable routing. I originally wanted to run full cable housings, but Chris discouraged that, saying that I'd notice the drag due to the long lengths of housing. A couple of the braze-ons were substituted for

saddles, so I could run hydraulic brakes in the future, in lieu of my Avid mechanical disk brakes. All this final fiddling resulted in a super clean cable arrangement, which only a custom bike maker can provide. Now I was ready for to take the bike to Superior Powdercoating for coloration.

I've always been a big Kawasaki fan, and wanted my bike to have that classic "Kawasaki Racing Green" finish – a bright green glow. Superior's closest match was a fluorescent green, so I chose that. After a week or so, I went to pick up the frame – it' looked blazingly green and I was stoked! Superior made sure they blanked off the Paragon sliding surfaces, and I only had to do an hour, or two, of work with a file and sandpaper to clean up the overspray ridges left on the frame's seatpost + headtube + bb + dropout areas. Later that night, showing the frame to a few friends who wanted to try out the bike's bottle opener, one noticed and said "what's that? Looks like a dent in the middle of the top tube." Yup, there was a small ding right in the center of the tube!!! I called Superior and they said they noticed it too, but forgot to tell me. I consulted Chris Zias on the ding, and he talked me down and said if one had to ding a tube, you'd want it there - instead of somewhere else. All in all, lotsa drama, but I didn't have to call my mama!

I built up the bike as a singlespeed again,





since I was still waiting on some 1x9 parts. Highland Recreation area was to be its first real test. It was super hot that day, and loops A+B were all we were motivated to ride. Highland is a real test for a bike's handling. The constant turning, up and down nature of the trail really can bring out the flaws in any bike design. While the Manitou R7 fork I'm using isn't that responsive, I was constantly impressed by the tenacious line-holding ability the Zias frame allowed for. You never ever feel like you can't make a corner, even when coming in too hot – just pure handling confidence. And it's no slouch going uphill or downhill either. The burly Paragon sliding dropouts never loosened up and the bottom bracket felt really stiff – the whole bike has a nice springy feel to it that makes you want to keep pedaling. After coasting into the parking lot, we fished around in the cooler for a couple of brews to cool us down. I selected a nice Dark Horse Crooked Tree IPA, and reached under the bike to open the bottle.....Uh oh! Can't seem to get the lip of the cap hooked.... Nooooo!!! Under further examination, I realized that with the rear wheel in place, there isn't enough room to get the bottle "in there" to hook the cap!!! I just had to laugh....but, it does have a bottle opener – which is what I wanted [never said I wanted one I could use with the wheels on, right?!]. It's an endearing part of the bike that only adds to the custom bike experience, which is about as positive a spin I can think of for now!

After a few weeks of singlespeeding around, I finally slapped on my 1x9 drivetrain. I decided to mount a 32T geared middle ring inboard of my Surly 34T singlespeed ring [located where the big ring would be], so whenever I feel like converting between singlespeed and 1x9, I don't have to mess with the cranks, since the chainrings for each use are already in position – no chainline tweaking necessary! I consider my 1x9 drivetrain to be a *Variable Ratio Singlespeed*. One can try out different ratios, and by merely moving a lever, switch from one cog ratio to another – all while pedaling! It's amazing – I predict more singlespeeds will have this feature one day. As a 1x9, my Zias Cycles bike really came into its own. The handling is still awesome [it's spectacular, btw], but it still feels like a singlespeed – it's just that I can ride it to the trail without taking

all day to get there. Try a 1x9 sometime, you may be surprised.

So as I said last time, I'd have to say my adventure with Chris Zias Cycles was a super success – with a few hiccups along the way. That's to be expected with any custom build. Chris is an excellent designer and fabricator, and he really gets what goes into a great riding frame. I might also add that it's a great feeling to support one of our local Michigan bike frame fabricators, so check Chris out at [www.ziascycles.com](http://www.ziascycles.com), and don't forget the nice folks at [www.superiorpowdercoating.net](http://www.superiorpowdercoating.net). You'll definitely see me on the trail – this bike is BRILLIANT, in more ways than one.

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*(Continued from page 8)*

Forest Service. This June he sent a letter to regional forest service staff about better accommodating mountain biking.

My first session was for urban bike parks, including the I-5 Colonnade trail in Seattle. There is tremendous opportunity for these in Detroit and throughout Michigan.

### Summary

As with any conference, much of the information and ideas you gain and give occur outside of the formal summit programming. That in itself was invaluable.

Carol Potter, the executive director for the Mountain Trails Foundation did an amazing job bringing this summit to Park City and then ensuring it was a home run. While Carol works in Park City now, she's originally from Cadillac, Michigan where she was also very involved in trails. It was great meeting Carol.

The only disappointment was that I was the only Michigan/MMBA person at the event. On the other hand, Indiana sent about five guys. They are really turning around their state's mountain bike trail situation and a quick and impressive manner.

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*(Continued from page 9)*

structures. Mike, Tim and Pete lead the charge as construction continued, in full force, every weekend through the end of June when the structures were finally complete. Work continued off and on during

July and into August with the focus on "finishing touches". Wood chips were piled underneath each structure, teeters were reinforced, jump lines were crafted, and signs were created.

The Grand Opening drew a huge number of excited bikers to check out the new park. It was a beautiful day and there were kids and adults riding the structures all day. Kim Moss had prepared a great spread of food in addition to grilling up burgers & dogs. It was a great reward for all the hard work. The Skills Park is now officially open, and every time I drive by or stop in, there are people out there having fun. I'd call this project a success!

I'd like to thank all of the hard working Metro North / MMBA volunteers who dedicated so much of their time and resources to the Stony Creek Skills Park. Every individual who helped work on this project has something they can be proud of, and the "new" Metro North chapter has a huge accomplishment to add to their advocacy books.

If you have a chance, stop by and see for yourself, maybe give the teeters a try.

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*(Continued from page 10)*

the coming months you might be seeing some new Jerseys out there. Mountain bike patrollers can be identified in several ways. Many will notice the white cross on red jerseys, others may see the older style green and yellow patrol jerseys. Patrollers will also carry a certification card, often a placard on the front of their bikes, and may have several white cross on red patches. They may also have black socks emblazoned with "Bike Patrol" on the sides. But, I think the most noticeable feature of any Patroller will be the gigantic trail luggage on their back, packed to the brim with first aid kits, spare parts, air sources, food, and more.

A special thanks goes out to Fraser Bikes for their incredible donation, American Cycle and Fitness, Macomb Bike and Fitness, and Michigan Orthopedic Supply in Kalamazoo! Without the generous donations of these store, the MBP would not exist.

Thank you all, Jonathan Rose and Shawn Murphy Co-Directors of the MBP



# First Losers Club

- Jody Beard

Race day arrives. I head out to the Fort with my brother's picture on the dash.

One of the last conversations with my Coach consisted of him lashing me because I registered beginner instead of sport. But it's my first race?! "Wait until I tell you I told you so!" he says. So it's like that huh? He's one of "those" people. First on the agenda. Change registration!

It's a good thing I arrived early because I wouldn't have done that for fear of what my eyes beheld as I walked away from that table. People on tricked out bikes, wearing superfastbadass clothes. They were everywhere. I was surrounded.

So I decide that riding around nervously is in order while I wait for people I know to show up. My bike isn't right because my chain and rear cog aren't mated. I snapped the chain Thursday night on a group ride for the kids at T.M.I. (shameless plug. check it out.) The tech for Breakaway looks at it. There's nothing I can do but pick a gear and stay there. Fabulous!

More nervous riding. My people appear. How foolish of me to think that having them there would alleviate some stress. "You gonna do great, you're gonna smoke 'em!" and other stuff like that came out of their mouths. Pressure! What if I don't place? What if I don't even finish? What if I get puke in my bottom bracket before I even start? Then the Coach arrives.

We go down to the start to watch Ed take

off and I start to feel a little more at ease, like this Race day arrives. I head out to the Fort with the picture of my brother on the dash.

might be do-able. He asks me if I want to ride around the lot. We ride around a few times. He's talking, I'm listening stressing about my bike. He taps my shoulder. I look and there pinched between his index finger and thumb is, you guessed it...a piece of Bubble Yum bubble gum. Original flavor. I melt. Not because of the heat. Okay he's trying to make me cry. He's one of "those" people!

It's time. I'm at the start. Gum in mouth. He's whispering sweet race nothing's in my ear, and I'm off....

I won't bore you with the race details but I will say this. The highlight of my day was having my Coach there at the beginning bringing a sense of calm. In the middle, shouting from the edge of the woods. At the end in the home stretch as I'm dying, riding along side of me encouraging, pushing, coaching. You have no idea how much you have impacted my life. Thank you.

Some things I learned on race day not necessarily in order of importance: 1) Mountain Bikers are the nicest people I've ever met. 2) It's the coolest feeling to pass people on tricked out bikes in superfastbadass clothes. 3) it's devastating to have them sling shot past you, crash about a mile later and never see them again until you're on the 2<sup>nd</sup> place block at the awards ceremony. 4) Replace your cog with the chain no matter what they say. 5) I'm going to like single speed much better. 6) The peo-

ple you meet on any given day may become part of your existence. Shaping and molding who you are. 7) What we do, those seemingly small decisions, things like bubble gum and letting people pass, profoundly affect those who come after us. 8) It's not about the bike you ride or the clothes you wear. 9) It's about what's in your heart...

I started race day reading my bible. I came across a verse in Ezekiel. It goes something like this...."Wherever the Spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels."

Standing under that tent waiting for the awards I got all choked up. I had to step away on more than one occasion for fear that someone would see me tear up for no apparent reason. You see, occasionally I am seduced by the belief that I don't need anybody. Do you know what I mean? The lie that comes when you know it's going to hurt too much to care. Well, I realized something amidst the buzz under the tent. That we are in fact the Living Creatures. Wheels filled with the Spirit. Rising up among each other. . And I felt a part of something larger. Larger than the bike I ride, the clothes I wear or my circumstances on any given day. And I wondered if this is what it feels like to be home.

And last but not least...

10) I need you people.

## Shifting Gears

- Eric Smith

Without fail, when I go out to ride my bike, it is to go fast, get that heart rate up and feel the euphoric state that only hard riding can give me. It is an irresistible obsession that I'm always chasing. So when my girlfriend and I made plans to take my 8-year-old daughter out to the trail on a perfect late-August Saturday, I knew at least for one day I wouldn't be getting my "fix". I can deal with

it though because I have learned how to shift gears. For this ride, it isn't about me or my heart rate or my "buzz". It's about transferring a little of that exuberant joy I have come to know to someone I cherish. It's slowing down and remembering why I love this experience in the first place.

So after helping her through the traumatic experience of detaching from the computer and the virtual world of the Sims, we make

the hour-long drive to a great pair of trails nearby. Once there, it's me that's slowing everyone down. I have all of these "special" things to get ready - the socks, the shoes, the camelback, gloves and glasses. For her it's just a matter of getting on the bike and taking off. "Daddy, let's go! Where does the trail start? Over here? Which way do we go?"

And then we're riding. She wants to lead and I tell her to "Be careful!" and "Look



ahead!". I will only tell her these things 25 more times the rest of the day. Soon, she's talking a mile a minute. She's excited and she can't hold it in. She's overflowing. Her words are tripping over each other when they can't keep up with her thoughts. "Daddy, I zoomed right over those logs!" "Daddy, this is like a rollercoaster." My favorite was, "Daddy, that one shocked my heart!" I explain to her that heart-shocking is a lot of the fun of mountain biking. My girlfriend and I exchange a knowing look. Yep, the little one is really digging this trail.

Eventually I take the lead, so I can prepare her for some of the difficult sections. I demonstrate the art of crashing by pirouetting off a wooden bridge skinny and landing back-first in a swamp. I get a few heart-shocks of my own when she decides she

wants to hit the skinnies a foot or so off the ground. But she rides it out and eventually I remember to breathe. Sometimes she reminds me "Daddy, you forgot to cheer me on back there!" Now and then I tell her to wait while I ride ahead and ditch my bike on the side of the trail, run back and help her through a fun section. Steep little banked rollers, high-up skinnies and teeter-totters all get cleared, with or without help. At one point, I get off the bike to help her through a small rock garden that goes right into a short steep climb. As she nears me she says "A deer!". A doe, not more than 10 or 12 feet away bounds down the hill and we see that her two fawns were watching and waiting for her. I have seen this kind of thing plenty of times, but my daughter is spell-bound and we stand there for a few minutes. She's watching the deer and I'm

watching her, transfixed. "Dad! That was my first deer on the trail!"

That day, we ride two mountain bike trails, each with beginner and intermediate sections, and two miles of a paved trail to connect them together. 14 miles altogether. And I couldn't be happier. This is better than my best time or my longest ride. I'll have plenty of other days to go fast and chase my heart rate. At the end of this day, success isn't measured in minutes and seconds. It isn't measured in pain and sweat. It is counted in excited screams of joy and in breathless smiles when she makes it up a tough hill or through a sketchy tight section. I can hardly wait for the next time.



Pierce Lind, 14, won the bike at the Mountain Kids Comedy Castle fundraiser in March. Pierce has autism and his dad, Steve Lind and one of the comedians who donated his time, says he loves his bike and has rode it all summer. Thank you to American Cycle and Fitness for your donation!



# Coach

- Jody Beard

As I was driving down the road, going over the mental list of things to make sure I'm ready for the race this weekend, I'm taken back. Reflecting on my first childhood race.

My brother Marty teaching me to ride. Believing that I could do anything on that Huffy Cactus Flower. And let me tell you I could. As long as he was there. I launched that thing off a six-foot dirt mound at the speed of light, all the way to the moon. Neighborhood boys would request a performance as they stood in disbelief at the fearlessness of.... yes a girl! And there my brother would sit on his GT beaming with pride arms folded across his chest. Crooked little half smile.

I was going through a box of pictures recently and I came across one of him on his bike. Sitting on it. Unconsciously one with the bike, even in stillness. Polishing the gooseneck. Loving his bike. If I had a scanner I would show it to you. You can tell just by looking at it that he has got it. That thing in him. Only another biker can see. . Sometimes you run across them that have this "thing". It's tangible. An aura around them that you can almost feel. The spirit they carry. Like the old pictures of the Saints with the halos that denote enlightenment. Yeah, that was him! The eyes that say, "It's no secret. Just ride. You're chosen. You belong." That was my brother.

He was the only one who could have ever talked me into doing some of the things we did on those bikes. It didn't matter if it was jumping dirt, bombing down hills, lapping

the bmx track in our yard for hours, or blazing new trails in the woods on anything with pedals. If he told me I could do it then I could. He had that gift of encouragement. Those of you that have it please don't take it lightly.

He groomed me and tutored me. He was my coach...and the one who told me I was good enough to race. So that's what I did. Powder Puff all the way. I remember that first race like it was yesterday. I could hear him bragging me up to his friends. He handed me a piece of Bubble Yum just before our heat took off. He grabbed my shoulders and said, "This will make you faster, you can do it. Your gonna win!" The gate dropped. My ears honed in on his voice cheering from the sidelines, coaching me all the way through. Past the pile of flesh and steel of the other two (yes, only two!) girls that crashed on the first berm. Over the table tops and whoop-dee do's. I could hear him cheering as I crossed the finish in first place. Let's just say that at that moment I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was proud to say that I was his little sister. After that day we could look each other in the eye and see that "thing" reflected to each other.

I wish I could say that those days carried on into our adulthood. But the story goes more like this. Marty took up four wheels with an engine instead of two with pedals. He died three months after his 16th birthday. Until recently part of me has been buried with him. I only rode when it was necessary after that. From point A to point B.

Years later I ride again. I'm racing as well. I can hardly believe it. People have been telling me since last summer that I should. I would just say to myself "Whatever! Those days are long gone." Eric told me that if I entered the lottery he would pay my Ice Man fee if I got picked. I entered thinking it was safe. I wouldn't get picked. I made the second round! I was seriously contemplating selling it and giving back his money until a few weeks ago. Last month I met someone with that "thing" is his eye and that crooked smile. He told me at just the right moment in space and time that he thought I should race. In August! Gulp! Maybe it was that cocky grin, but I began to believe that perhaps he was right.

He got a road bike the other day and I was giving him crap about abandoning the trails. I've talked to so many people who get a road bike and they stop treading. His words were this. "I live to mountain bike. This is just another tool to improve that. It's life support." How profound. That it is, Double D! Life support!

This Sunday is more than just a race, and my mount, more than a bike. This is picking up where I left off so many years ago. This is life support. Climbing out of my brother's grave. That 14 yr old girl, built like a boy is riding. Her brothers voice and that crooked smile, seeing Her through to the finish. And so this is Mountain Biking." The church of the rolling wheel."\*

Where the dead are resurrected.

\* By i69whitey 8/12/08 as quoted from "Getting Slapped" MMBA General Forum

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## My Midland Trail Experience

- Gary Anderson (Santa Cruz)

A few years ago during the MS150 Sunday morning breakfast, I ran into a fellow mountain biker named Jim and we shared our experiences of different trails we had ridden in Michigan. He mentioned one that I hadn't heard of that he and others had invested a ton of hours into and about all the various technical aspects of it. The Midland City

Forest was the location, and he suggested that I check it out - I was definitely interested. As time passes quickly and it being about 2 hours away, it was always in the back of my mind, but I never really got up there to ride it. It was always on my list of places to visit, so finally, one weekend this past summer while visiting some friends in Houghton Lake I made the journey.

It was a sunny Friday morning, I arrived at the trail head about 10am and had the trail to myself with plenty of time to explore it's four loops. I started off on the North loop, loved the oak tree ramp, but due to it being my first time there, wasn't sure which way to go and crossed the west bridge putting me on the South loop. No matter, it's all



good singletrack and I was having a great time already. I made the turn onto Frog Holler, a fun twisty little loop and I passed the swampy area that must have given the trail it's name. Back onto the South loop, I came across the path to the Gnu loop. This turned out to be my favorite because of the things that Jim had mentioned, the teeter-totter, various broken concrete/wooden walkways, the long log skinny, the elevated Boy Scout bridge and all the delightfully twisty & rooty, pine needle covered singletrack through the large old growth trees. I enjoyed it so much that I rode it again and I think I rode the Boy Scout bridge back & forth four times wishing it was longer, it reminded me of a similar section in the Shingle Mill trail. I continued riding the South loop along the creek banks and was really digging the way it traversed up and down the banks, riding the concrete

armoring even though the trail was perfectly dry.

I ended up riding the South loop two times just as a result of getting back to finish riding the half of the North loop that I had missed. While I was riding, I shared the woods with deer, dozens of these little frogs/toads that were all over the trail, hopping out of the way as I came through and countless black and gray squirrels playing in the leaves off to the sides. Getting back to my truck three and a half hours and 18 miles later, I was so glad that I had decided to experience this fine, well maintained and fun trail system, and I don't think that I ever stopped smiling the whole time I was riding it. Thank you to Jim, the Boy Scouts and all the other people responsible for building and maintaining this little mid-state gem !!

The only negative thing I would say would be all of the patches of broken glass on the trail surface, I never flattened, but it could tarnish an otherwise great ride. For some reason I have seen this a lot in other city park trails probably from past users dropping their bottles and then vandals breaking them for fun, and then as the dirt gets more use, the glass becomes exposed and poses a hazard. I will usually get off my bike and toss what I can off into the brush, but there was too much of it here. It should be addressed during one of your trail days ? Maybe it is just a pet peeve ?

Anyways, if you haven't ridden this trail before, make it a point to get up and ride this one, you won't regret it, the MTB riders in Midland have a cool trail.

## 2008 Tree Farm Relay Race



Photos by Hans Nyberg/Ten Mile Media





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**MMBA encourages volunteer work by mountain bicyclists.**

**MMBA partners with government agencies.**

**MMBA supports key local, regional, national and international advocacy efforts and projects.**

**MMBA works to increase the diversity of mountain biking.**

**MMBA is a leader in creating and sharing trail construction, maintenance and management solutions.**

**MMBA is an active member of the trails community.**

**MMBA promotes the development of new, high-quality trails and trail systems.**

**MMBA works with racers and the racing community to assure that racers serve as positive role models for the sport.**



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